

# SOCIAL ACTION

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MAY 15, 1948



## A POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA

### Firmness and Patience

By Vernon H. Holloway

### Mutual Understanding

By Leo Grulio



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## Magazine

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Cover: Official United Nations Photos

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# America Seizes the Initiative

Since the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia in February, tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union have reached new peaks of intensity. Aroused by threats of further Communist expansion, American policy has suddenly taken the offensive, with the final enactment of the European Recovery Program, further aid to Greece and Turkey, support to the national government of China, pressures on the Italian electorate, renewed propaganda overseas, and the like. To give additional weight to this more positive foreign policy, the nation is moving rapidly toward rearmament, and talk of war is again in the air.

From Russia's standpoint, the United States has been an actual or potential enemy from the outset. The continued manufacture of atomic bombs; the fortification of bases in the Pacific; military maneuvers at Bikini and in the Mediterranean and the Arctic; the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan—these and other aspects of American policy have been interpreted by the Russians as justifying their suspicions and security measures.

In the light of all these developments, the most important topic in the current social scene is that of American-Russian relations and the policies of each toward the other. *Social Action* seeks to contribute to a wise discussion of this topic by the two thoughtful articles that follow. Both deal with American policy toward Russia, as that is the proper concern of American readers, but both are cognizant of the difficult problems posed by Russia's attitudes and foreign policies.

The topic originally scheduled for this issue of *Social Action*, on the dilemmas and strategies of Christians and democrats who oppose both Communism and reaction, will be treated in the fall.

L. P.

# *A Policy Toward Russia: Firmness and Patience*

By Vernon H. Holloway

It is a new experience for the United States to feel insecure after participating in a major military victory, and it is also a new experience for it to be engaged in intense rivalry with Russia. The prevention of a third world war in our time and in our children's time depends very largely upon the desire and the ability of these two giants to avoid coming to blows.

It is now obvious that the two great powers are not partners in the making of "one world." But this does not mean that either of them must conclude that in order to survive it must vanquish the other. Indeed, it would be most difficult if not impossible for either the United States or Russia to conquer the other. Such a war may come, with tremendous damage and suffering, but it is difficult to see how either nation could emerge the victor and successfully police the other one.

Those persons who earnestly seek peace and justice must therefore endeavor to understand the nature of this conflict and the possibilities for regulating and checking it.

## *Why Has the Conflict Developed?*

Russian-American tension is not due simply to a clash of "ideologies"—of democratic versus dictatorial politics, and capitalist versus communist economies. It is due in part to the fact that one of the consequences of the second World War is the rise of the United States and Russia to the rank of first-rate

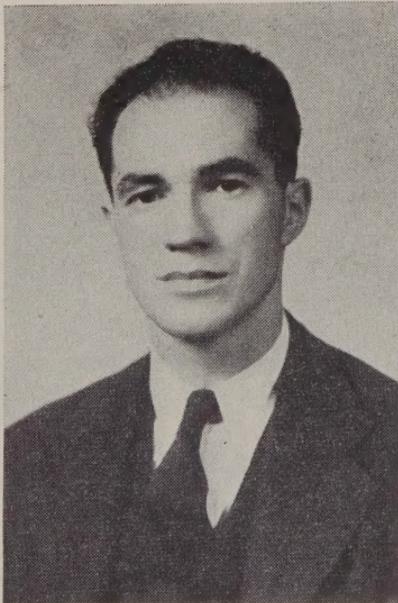
powers, displacing the former great powers of the pre-war world. Germany, Japan, and Italy have been defeated in war. China is engaged in civil war and lacks industrial strength. France and the United Kingdom were impoverished by the war. Russia (along with China) suffered the heaviest damages and the greatest loss of life in the recent war, but she has a great population, a rising birth-rate, large natural resources, and a national government which is continuing its efforts for ambitious industrial development. The homeland of the United States suffered no war damage, and American losses of life through military action were less than the death toll from domestic accidents during the war years. American industrial capacity has increased, although the rate of population growth is diminishing.

These are some of the physical and social factors which help to measure the ability of nations to wage war. In such terms, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. are the great potential enemies in a third

## The Author

Since April, 1944, Vernon Holloway has been International Relations Secretary of the Council for Social Action. Earlier, he had taught at Ohio Wesleyan University, and had served as pastor of Congregational churches in Connecticut while pursuing graduate study at Yale Divinity School. During his service for the C.S.A., he has played a leading role in the efforts to relate Protestant churches more effectively to the problems of world order.

This article by Mr. Holloway is a condensation of a chapter in his book, *Christians and the World of Nations*, published this month by the Pilgrim Press.



world war. In addition, the heritage of nationalism and past insecurity is enough to make each of the giants suspicious of the other. The wide difference between their political, economic and social views increases their suspicions and fears. Their peoples, by and large, want peace. But they also want security, if peace is not forthcoming, and they are unwilling to place their full trust in the United Nations' efforts for collective security. There is serious question as to whether the Russian Communist Party desires peace with the noncommunist world or believes that it is possible. A similar question may be asked about some individuals and groups in the United States.

### *What Are Russia's Aims?*

A number of reporters, including business, labor and religious leaders from the United States, agree that the Russian people whom they have seen are: (1) fearful of war, and anxious for peace; (2) eager to rebuild their country and achieve an industrial civilization; (3) as much concerned as we are for "freedom" and "justice," although these terms have a different meaning for them.

In contrast, there is sharpest disagreement about the intentions of the Soviet *rulers*. According to one view, these rulers have never given up their Marxist ideas of world-wide conflict and a communist world order. The statements of Russian leaders are cited as proof. For example, here is a quotation from a 1947 letter written by a Russian official:

Remember well that in England, in America, in Spain and in other countries, the monster of fascism does not cease to agitate. It . . . aspires to reign in absolute mastery over the world.

And soon the day will come, when all peoples will unite in a single effort to annihilate forever the capitalist and fascist power. And then, no atomic bombs that they are inventing at the present time can save them. Their death is imminent, it is very near, it is at their door. . . .

But according to another view, the chief aim of Russia's

foreign policy is national security, resulting from her acute fear that she is, or may be, the target of aggressive policies by other nations, especially the United States. Her apprehensions are rooted deeply in her history, as she has suffered one invasion after another, and most of these involved murder, torture, and great destruction upon Russian soil. The invasion of Russia by western nations in 1918, and the efforts of certain western leaders to turn Hitler against Russia by appeasing him, have hardly increased Russia's confidence in her security against the western powers.

We might take a third view, holding that it is not now possible to make a final judgment of the Soviet Government's long-range plans, which may be as subject to change as are those of our own nation. Perhaps the Russian leaders are themselves



Sovfoto

Buildings in the central part of Stalingrad destroyed by  
enemy bombing.

divided. It is also possible that some of their loud cries of fear are an attempt to unify the Russian people in support of the dictatorship.

Whichever of these views we hold, the problem of charting American foreign policy remains difficult.

### ***American Attitudes and Policies***

The United States has only recently emerged from her isolationist tradition. Those who administer her foreign policy have been unable to define it clearly. This is due not only to the many uncertainties of the world situation, but also to the fact that we, as a nation, are only beginning to realize the extent of our power in relation to others, and we ourselves are uncertain, confused, and divided. There is uncertainty about the world, and there is uncertainty as to what the American people and their Congress will support.

There are some who are ready now to prepare for a holy war against Russia, or who voice the need for a "preventive" war before Russia becomes our equal in atomic weapons. At the other extreme is the American Communist Party, and close to it are individuals and groups who are sharply opposed to any American policy of "firmness" toward Russia.

In between these extremely opposed views are those who, hoping that a third world war may be avoided, believe that American policy should combine both patience and firmness. They think that, whether Russia is bent on world conquest or desires only her national security, the United States must oppose, wherever it is able to do so, any further Russian expansion, hoping that in the long run the rise of other nations and the growth of the United Nations will increase the chances for orderly solutions. The European Recovery Program of American aid to the nations of western Europe may be defended as an example of this type of policy.

### ***The Importance of European Recovery***

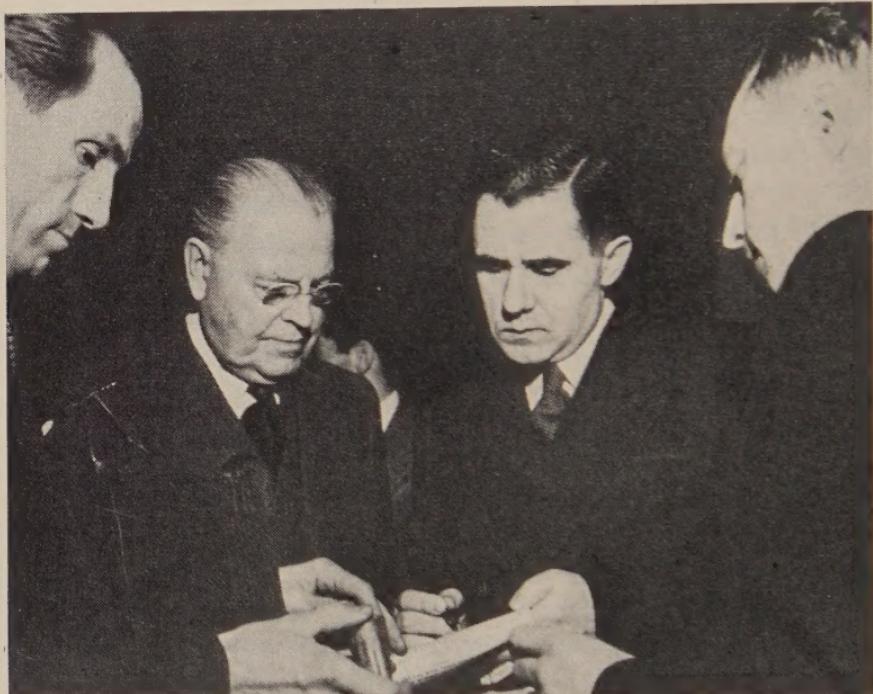
In the past, central Europe has been a pathway between Russia and the western world. This path has led to Russia's

greatest victories and her greatest disasters. Her leaders regard this area as the most important for expansion and control, whether their aim is purely "defense" or ultimate world-conquest. Since the end of the war Russia has succeeded in binding Poland and several other nations of central and eastern Europe to the area which she controls. She has been less successful in penetrating the countries of western Europe, where she encounters the opposition of the western democracies including the United States.

Since the United States has a vital interest in preventing any strong and aggressive power from penetrating to the "Atlantic community" of states, she cannot ignore the need for the economic and social recovery of these nations, and their independence from Russian domination. This double aim underlies the Marshall Plan, or European Recovery Program. The Communists called this proposal "imperialism," and others who are close to them said it was nothing but a "cold war" against Russia. At the other extreme were some who supported the plan only because it would "stop Russia," and others who opposed it because they felt war would be inevitable and Europe would be of no use to us. However, for many Americans, including many of our outstanding leaders, the European Recovery Program is both a moral obligation and an act of national self-interest, serving to aid the recovery of other peoples and to discourage Russian expansion.

### *The Principles of "Firmness and Patience"*

American statesmen have had little success in their attempts to negotiate with Russia in the United Nations, in the Council of Foreign Ministers, in the Allied Control Councils in Berlin and Vienna, in the Far Eastern Commission, in Korea and elsewhere. Our nation is involved, whether it wishes to be or not, in a wide range of problems in which there is tension with Russia. Our foreign activities extend around the world: military experiments in Canada, bases in Greenland, the occupation of Germany, economic aid to western Europe, economic and



*Official UN Photo*

Warren R. Austin, U.S., left, and Andrei A. Gromyko, U.S.S.R., at a meeting of the UN Security Council. Given time, the UN may help to bring adjustment between the two great powers.

military support in Greece and Turkey, protection of oil supplies in the Near East, aid to the Nationalist Government of China, intervention in Korea, supervision of Japan, strategic bases and control of islands in the Pacific, and the development and defense of Alaska.

Russia looks with suspicion and fear at this far-flung "circle" of American interests and activities. The United States, in turn, is suspicious of Russian designs or is in open conflict with Russia at most of these points, and has become fearful of Communist Party activities within her own borders. Thus the two powers are involved in mutual fears and in defensive planning against one another.

Those who hope that war may be avoided, but who also feel that Russia should not be invited to continue her expansion, conclude that our American obligation is to practice both firmness and patience. Whether the American people have the ability to do this during a long period of tension is a serious question. A policy of "firmness" will include resistance to Russian expansion by helping other peoples, within the limit of our resources, to become healthy and independent. Economic aid for the reconstruction of noncommunist Europe is of the utmost importance. A vigorous overseas public information policy, to make American aims clear to the world, is another essential instrument. Equally important, and difficult to determine, is the size and quality of the American military forces. Can our military establishment be kept sufficiently strong to command respect from an opponent who measures us in terms of our power, but without the military becoming the dominant element in American life?

Firmness must be balanced by patience and restraint. World order and peace will not be served if Americans are unprepared for a period of tension, of bitter Russian propaganda, and of Soviet refusal to cooperate with the majority of the members of the United Nations in economic, political and atomic energy affairs. Of the two qualities—firmness and patience—the American people will find it more difficult to exercise the second. As we begin to realize more and more the extent of our power, and of its importance to the world, our moral problem may cease to be isolationism and become the need for restraint. Self-restraint in the exercise of power will not be possible without self-criticism.

### *The Need for Self-Criticism*

It is always easy for a nation to see the sins of its opponents, without any sense of its own sinfulness. The more firmly the United States acts to resist Russian expansion, the greater will be her temptation to act self-righteously. The Russian leaders

are very self-righteous because their communist faith leads them to believe that history is "on their side," and that Soviet Russian victories are triumphs not only of power but also of goodness. But the future of American-Russian relations will be all the worse, and there will be no hope for peace, if America similarly regards herself as wholly righteous and sees nothing good in Russian achievements.

Without patience and understanding the stage will be set for a third world war. We do not know how possible it may be for Russian leaders to exercise patience or to achieve any appreciation of the western democracies. But our responsibility is to start with ourselves, and to try to see ourselves from Russian viewpoints and from those of other peoples of the world. We shall not be able to do this unless the churches in the United States help to provide a religious and moral standard which pricks the American conscience, reminding us that there is a Divine Judge in Whose sight both Russia and the United States are at fault.

In the interest of world justice, American power must be used on behalf of peoples whose weakness and poverty make them inviting targets for communist exploitation. But American power will not be used justly if it seeks to make pawns of those whom it would protect. Nor will the United States command the respect of the noncommunist nations if it contradicts its own democratic principles. We have betrayed, and still are betraying, some of our own principles, especially in the field of racial equality. In the world in which we live, a world in which justice and power must be brought together, the true ends of justice cannot be served unless those who seek justice, and who have power, are able to practice repentance and humility.

Moscow radio programs, carrying anti-American propaganda, may infuriate us with their falsehoods and distortions of American life. But sometimes they contain elements of truth, referring to racial injustices in the United States, the presence of

slums in our cities, and lies about Russia in some of our newspapers.

The more we strive for great equality at home, and for the freedom and welfare of other peoples, the more firm we will be in the defense of democracy, and the more sincere in working with other nations to realize the goals of the United Nations Charter. If we can disprove the communist belief that we are headed for economic failure, and if we can help to bring about the growth of other independent centers of power such as a federated Europe and an independent China, the Russian-American conflict may be checked and the United Nations may have a chance to succeed.



Mr. Holloway (extreme right) leads a church group participating in one of the United Nations Seminars arranged by the Council for Social Action. The visitors see the United Nations at work, confer with its staff members, and then have private sessions with discussion leaders who are specialists in international affairs.

# *A Policy Toward Russia:* Mutual Understanding

By Leo Gruliov

For two years I traveled through Russia, observing the distribution of American relief supplies, and one of my most vivid recollections is of a simple question put to me by a young man near Orel.

He was a peasant who had fought in the Red Army, had been wounded and discharged, and had returned to his village. He was, as I said, young; and he had a great curiosity about America. We talked a long time about Americans and Russians.

The Americans, he reflected, must resemble the Russians in many ways.

Yes, I said. We both have big spaces and we love to do big things; we both work hard and talk big.

And American *tekhnika*, he reminded me: American machines. Yes, we are like each other, he went on. Only what is this thing, a farm? Is it a landholder's estate or a peasant's acreage, or how?

I explained that an American rural family may have its home on the land it cultivates, often far from towns or even from neighbors. He nodded slowly. So that was a farm!

After I returned to the United States I was often reminded of the young peasant from Orel. Sometimes when I mentioned "the peasants of a village," Americans frowned and asked: "Just what is a peasant? And these Russian villages—are they like ours?" And I had to explain that, from time immemorial, back through the days of serfdom, the Russian village always

had been a huddle of homes and barns, while the fields might lie miles away.

### One Ultimate Issue

American history and American circumstances, Russian history and Russian circumstances, are as disparate as can be imagined. And both these peoples, separated by the gulf of their differences, know and understand pitifully little of each other. Essentially, beyond alarms and strife, there is one ultimate issue in our relations: it is what a Russian friend of mine calls "mutual understanding."

"Mutual understanding" is a phrase sometimes loosely used. Too often the "mutual" is ignored. It is easy to ignore it, if you are intent only on making Americans approve of the Russians, for instance, and you overlook the Russians' ignorance of America; or if you are intent only on making the Russians

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### The Author

Having spent several years as a newspaperman in the Soviet Union, Leo Gruliov was chosen as research director for Russian War Relief when this agency was organized in 1941, and he was its American representative in the Soviet Union from 1943 to 1945. He left this organization in 1946, and since then he has conducted a lecture course at the New School for Social Research in New York City, been international guest lecturer at Grinnell College, and lecturer at International Relations Institutes conducted by the Friends Service Committee.

Mr. Gruliov will be remembered by readers of *Social Action* for his article, "UNRRA and After," which appeared in November, 1946. This present article represents a condensation of a speech delivered at the Institute for Religious and Social Studies in New York City.





Sovfoto

The Russian youth has a great curiosity about America.

**Above:** Harvesting on the Timoshenko collective farm.

aware of American power, and you overlook our own ignorance of Russia. Partisanship of this kind reflects a desire of some of our extremists to make America over into the Russian mold, and of other extremists to see Russia made over into the American mold. The one uses "understanding" of Russia as a wedge for Communist views. The other sees "red" at the mere mention of the word "understanding" in connection with Russia. The existence of this partisan atmosphere is one of the greatest barriers to true mutual understanding.

Somewhere in between the extremes are those to whom "mutual understanding" means *mutual* and to whom it implies frank recognition of our fundamental differences, and acceptance of the fact in our struggle to get along together in the atomic age.

## Are We Going to Fight Them?

I came back from Russia at the end of 1945, flying across Siberia and Alaska. After the two years I had spent in the midst of Russia's devastation and hardship, I was amazed at the richness and power of America. I was flying from Fairbanks, Alaska, and jotting down my fresh impressions of America. I had notes on my list such as: "electric light unrationed"—"seconds' at meals"—"matches for the asking" (matches were rationed in Russia, fifty a month)—"paper, ink and pencils to be had"—and even "girls have hairdos." A chance travelling companion asked if I had been overseas. Yes, I said, Russia—relief work. So you've been in Russia! he said. Well, tell me, are we going to fight them?

I stopped short. It seemed a strange question. No one in Russia had asked it. The thought of another war had not been in Russian minds.

Across the country I read the newspapers and blinked. I picked up a *Woman's Home Companion* and learned that five out of six Americans expected war with Russia within ten years or less.

## No Excuse for Ignorance

The second question I heard concerning Russia was: "Say, haven't the Russians abolished money, or something?" It brought home to me our abysmal, disgraceful ignorance about the country we were presumably to fight. If we are to fight her we should know more about Russia; if we are not to fight her, then again we must do some studying.

Certainly Americans have no excuse for ignorance on this vital subject. We have the best informed press in the world, the best stocked libraries and no censorship. Anyone troubled by so great a fear as that of war has—in America—the opportunity, the privilege and perhaps the obligation to consult the almost unlimited variety of sources at his disposal. It is not easy to employ these sources, for so many reflect bitterly-held and one-sided viewpoints. The great merit of American free-

dom of information, however, lies in just that—our opportunity to consult the most varied reports and to check them, one against the other, and arrive at a balance.

As for the "iron curtain" of Russian censorship, which some claim prevents us from discovering truth about Russia, I have yet to see any censorship that is effective against the American public for more than the briefest period—and Soviet Russia has been in existence a long time. It is difficult for our correspondents to obtain visas to enter the Soviet Union and it is difficult for them to travel about or to pass their stories through the censorship. But the stricter the censorship, the greater the "scarcity value" it places in America upon the rare uncensored story; and in the end the censorship defeats itself, as we have seen time and again in the case of Russia. The censorship does keep some information from the Russians, but it does not cut off information effectively from us. Censorship can be no excuse for American ignorance.

### *Fear of the Unknown*

Yet, despite the unsurpassed availability of news and books, the majority of Americans are strangely uninformed of the land and the people that loom so large in their nightmares. According to a survey conducted by the Office of Public Opinion Research, out of our adult population of 90,000,000, there are 75,000,000 who do not know that only a small percentage of Soviet citizens is enrolled in the Communist Party; 70,000,000 do not know that Russia produced most of her own war materiel, and 63,000,000 do not know that a Soviet citizen may own his home or other personal property.

Perhaps in part out of our ignorance, and in part because Russian behavior is conditioned by entirely alien circumstances, and therefore often seems to us abnormal and incomprehensible, we are gripped with fear. Sometimes it is almost like a national cramp. We, the world's greatest power, with the greatest navy, the greatest air force, sole possession of the atom bomb, control of bases dotting the globe and perhaps two-

thirds to three-fourths of the world's production facilities—we, the only nation to emerge from the war stronger than we went in—we are afraid. Like Russia's fears, ours reflect our own inadequacies and uneasiness.

### *Contemporary Soviet Psychology*

Two main factors contribute to the Soviet psychology of today: great hardship, and acute, exaggerated pride—call it arrogance—which often tries to hide the fact of hardship beneath an understandable boastfulness. By the standards of a comfortable, well-fed, rich and hitherto secure America, both these things are abnormal. It is difficult for us to appreciate or share the psychology of a country filled with this pride and faced with this need. But at least we in America can, if we wish, know these facts and use this knowledge to guide ourselves in our relations.



*Sovfoto*

The Karl Marx Collective Farm in Balkaria. The private homes and gardens of the farmers are shown here.

There is another important factor in Soviet psychology: fear, or suspicion, or both. It has been traced in Russian history to the succession of invasions and defeats at the hands of the Mongol khans, the Teutonic knights, the Swedes, the Lithuanians, the Poles, the French, the Germans. Throughout Russian history the foreigner was an invader and an enemy.

Further, the rise to power of the Bolsheviks brought to leadership a generation of men who had spent their youth in exile, in hiding, in fear and suspicion and danger. They knew "the capitalist" as their enemy.

For the Russians, the powerful foreigner and the capitalist are both now epitomized in the United States.

### *Search for Security*

Today Russia has signed up the Slavic countries as allies; we have signed up Latin America and hold to military cooperation with the British. Today Russia dominates the affairs of Eastern and Central Europe and we dominate the affairs of the Far East. Today the Russians hold the Kuriles and wish to control the Dardanelles, while we have consolidated our hold on new Pacific bases and our influence in the Near East and Mediterranean. Today the Russians seek the atom bomb while we continue to stockpile the terrible weapon. Today Russia builds up her air force while we study the Arctic as a battlefield. Both of us reach out farther and farther in search of an illusory security, and build up our mutual suspicions. We are both caught in a vicious circle, in which we denounce Russian censorship and the Russians denounce Hearst, in which the air is filled with recrimination over blocs and satellites, imperialism, the maintenance of armed forces and the manufacture of atom bombs, the use of food, trade and loans as diplomatic weapons, the clash of ideologies and contention for spheres of influence.

How does one undo this atmosphere? Where does one break these circles of mutual recrimination, that we may build a spirit of peace? That we must do so is a platitude. Ours are the only two nations today capable of modern warfare. Others may quar-

rel; we alone can fight. If we come to an armed clash, the conflict must be disastrous and may well be issueless. We can only set in motion a terrible new world war, perhaps world civil war, with the attendant destruction of much of civilization and with a terrible setback to democracy, regardless of which side may eventually survive. Where do we start in building the understanding of one another that is basic to peace?

### **Common Ground**

First and fundamental is the recognition that we not only must but can live side by side if we will—radically different as we are. We have one thing in common which transcends our differences of political democracy and dictatorship. That is the humanitarian goal which both our peoples profess. It is a basic element in the outlook of our two peoples, and it sets us off from the German or Japanese or Spanish dictatorships just as much as Russia's communist economy or America's political democracy. Although we both implement our humanistic views imperfectly—the one with political dictatorship and the belief that ends justify means, the other with racial barriers and economic insecurities—nevertheless there can be common ground between Americans cherishing a humanistic Walt Whitman and Russians cherishing a compassionate Maxim Gorki.

But before that common ground can be widened to bridge the gap between us, we must overcome our ignorance of one another's history and circumstances—the history and circumstances that have caused us to become so different. That is not easy. It means the abandonment of dogma and prejudice on both sides. And it will take many years to overcome those deeply implanted barriers.

### **Russia's Handicaps**

We in America are lucky. We can well pride overselves on our democracy. Sometimes we do not realize how lucky we are and how great a debt we owe to our history. Consider for a moment Russia and some of the other countries which we judge

by the standards we have been able to attain ourselves. What kind of government does one expect in a country hardly one generation from general illiteracy, a country which in all its history has known nothing but despotism; a country of backward peasantry, repeated famine and invasions? Every ten years in recorded history Russia has had a grave famine. She has been invaded at least once in every century, and defeated time after time; her few victories have been Pyrrhic. Democracy takes root in peace and prosperity and the delicate balancing of conflicting social groups over a period of time. Russia has enjoyed none of these conditions. Russians have not known the kind of security accepted as part of his very being by an American—the calm assumptions from experience that he will have peace, and if war, victory; that he will not starve, physically starve in large numbers, even in time of depression; and that his political life need not express itself in terms of violence and upheaval. This has been our great good fortune in the past and we should rightly be proud of its product, for all its imperfections. But it is unreal to assume that others who have lacked these conditions for generations should see life and the world through our eyes and should share our goals, in our terms. Rather must we strive to comprehend the conditions which have given rise to another spirit, and seek to find, despite current tensions, a sufficient common ground between our people to enable us to preserve and advance both our societies in peace.

### *Rending the Iron Curtain*

What we do will determine in great measure the trend of Soviet development. By building our own democracy so that it is strong enough to meet the tests of economic stress and strain we may convince the Russians, as President Roosevelt may have done for a time, that our society is able to solve its problems in its own way and need not be subject to crises and war and the danger of fascism. One of the most significant events in postwar Russia was the protracted and fierce debate among Soviet economists over whether capitalism—and specifically American cap-

italism—can look forward to a degree of at least temporary stability, and hence, in Soviet eyes, peace. Even though an answer in the negative now seems to be determining Soviet policies, that debate is not yet settled, and past history would suggest that the Soviet leaders are open to change of thought if the facts—and time—prove them wrong. Over a long period of time, too, we may be able to tell them our story in spite of censorship. We may not penetrate to the great Russian public with that story at first, but we may drive it home to their leaders as the story of a young and virile democracy, that they may accept it and in time understand it, as we must understand and accept the facts of Soviet life. And finally, over a stretch of many, many years, we may slowly and gradually bring it home to the mass of Russians, too.



Sovfoto

Farm village of Burnosovo rebuilt. Many difficulties had to be overcome by the collective farmers before even these new homes could be built.

There are those who feel we cannot succeed. They believe the iron curtain to be insurmountable. I do not think Russian censorship is likely to disappear until such time as the Russians have reached the same sense of security—military, economic, social—as we enjoy—or at least enjoyed prior to the great depression and before the advent of "the bomb." But that the censorship is permanently insurmountable or truly impenetrable, I doubt. Among Russians I found a great receptiveness to American information and culture. They were studying English up and down the Soviet Union when I was there. An effort was being made to train enough teachers to offer English in all public schools. In a medical school in Central Asia they were studying English and consulting the files of the American Medical Association *Journal*. The last person I saw on Russian soil was a 13-year-old boy in the Arctic, struggling with a Basic English edition of O. Henry short stories. While I was in Russia, Soviet officials asked for contributions of American books in English to restock their burned-out libraries for students of foreign languages.

### *Opportunity for Leadership*

I have talked a great deal of the necessity for America to understand the Russian background, and little of the necessity for the Russians to comprehend ours. Both are equally important. I stress the one because I am addressing Americans, but also because it is in America that we can make a start. Ours is the opportunity to display leadership.

If America can be strong and democratic at home, can face the ills of our own society with equanimity and confidence, we can afford to take the lead in building understanding with Russia. From the vantage point of our strength and prosperity we can be daring in ways we can hardly expect of the Russians, in their straits and with their history behind them. This is our opportunity, the opportunity to build peace with the courage and insight that behoves a power of our world position. Only

a country with our heritage of security can be expected to lead in exhibiting the understanding which must underlie peace.

It will be hard. The Russians are not easy to deal with, nor can they be expected to be. There will continue to be friction, irritations and clashes. There will be contention and rivalry of philosophies. There will be bad feeling for a long time to come and it will take more than one generation to attain true "mutual understanding." This is the hard way to peace. There is no other way that I know. There is a great task before men of the spirit and men of the mind—to grasp this opportunity and to look deeply into our hearts and minds, that more of us may ask not, "Are we going to fight them?" but: "What is a village?" and then, perhaps years later, hear an echo from a distant land: "What is a farm?"

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*The Council for Social Action issued a statement on "The United States and the European Situation," on April 23. Since this statement reflects some of the principles expressed in this issue of Social Action magazine, a brief summary is given here:*

Neither war nor peace with Soviet Russia is inevitable. American policies with respect to the U.S.S.R. must avoid both appeasement and hysteria. We are prepared to support the following views and goals:

1. American domestic and foreign policies whose major emphasis is the service of freedom and democracy rather than "anti-Communist" and "anti-Russian" programs.
2. Continued support of the European Recovery Program.
3. United States participation in joint regional security arrangements with European nations under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

4. Military forces for the United States adequate to make meaningful the above commitment to European regional security. We are opposed to a program of indiscriminate military expansion.

5. Expansion of international action wherever possible through the United Nations and other agencies. We urge prompt renewal of reciprocal trade agreements, ratification of the World Health Organization, an interest-free loan for the United Nations permanent headquarters, the reopening of trade between Eastern and Western Europe, and American admission of a fair share of the European displaced persons.

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## FEDERAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ISSUES PEACE STATEMENT

On April 30 there was presented to President Truman, and then released to the press, a statement by the Federal Council of Churches entitled *A Positive Program for Peace*.

Dealing with the "short-range task of averting war without yielding sound democratic principles," the Federal Council called upon the churches "to change the present prevailing mood which makes for war." Among the points of emphasis were the following:

1. War is not inevitable, but hysteria and blind hatred may easily lead to war.

2. American military strength is necessary, but the main defense of democracy lies in positive programs for social reconstruction.

3. The European Recovery Program is an example of non-military resourcefulness. Such efforts, directed toward economic reconstruction and social welfare, and accompanied by the clarification and defense of fundamental human rights, would help to check the spread of terrorism.

Copies of the statement are available from the Federal Council at 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. (5c.)

## On To Action

Could the United States improve relations with Russia if it sought to negotiate outside the regular diplomatic channels of the State Department and the Kremlin? Several such proposals have recently been made. The president of the American Society for International Law, Dr. C. C. Hyde, proposed that we send General Dwight D. Eisenhower to meet with Marshal Joseph Stalin. The Moderator of the Congregational Christian Churches, President Albert W. Palmer, urged that we appoint a representative committee invested with plenipotentiary powers to negotiate with a similar committee of Russians. Do such moves offer any new hope of solving our basic problems?

It is not expected that such conferences would secure men who are more competent than those on the regular diplomatic missions. Rather, it is hoped that these men would be more free of past commitments and present pressures. But if such were the case it would be their weakness and not their strength. The pressures for national security, rising standards of living and fundamental freedoms cause the very difficulties with which they ought to deal. Lay negotiators, no less than professional, would face Russian disdain of capitalist nations and American suspicion of socialist economies.

The remedy lies at the source of the social pressures which move the negotiators and we, the people, are that source. Our representatives can improve relationships only as we develop informed, responsible public opinion and improve racial, economic and political practices. The chief trouble is not with the diplomats or the diplomatic channels but in the pressures which lie behind them. The hope of any eventual improvement rests with us.

Ray Gibbons